

*Christian's Groans in the mortal Body, and  
Desires of the Heavenly Happiness.*

*B. R. G.*

236  
A  
S E R M O N

Occasioned by the

D E A T H

Of the late R E V E R E N D

Mr. *John Billingsly*;

Who departed this Life *May* the 2<sup>d</sup>  
in the 65<sup>th</sup> Year of his Age:

Preached at *Crutched-Fryers*, *May* 13. 1722.

By *W. H A R R I S.*

To which is added, the *SPEECH* at the Grave.

L O N D O N:

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## 2 CORIN. V. 2.

*For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our House which is from Heaven.*



Shall have Occasion to consider what is most remarkable in the Context, in the Progress of this Discourse; and shall proceed immediately to the Words themselves. *In this we groan*: Either in this Body, while we dwell in the *earthly House of this Tabernacle*, v. 1. or else, upon this Account, and for this Cause, ἐν ἡμῶν, with which the Word οὐκία will not agree. We labour under so many Pressures and Difficulties in this bodily State, that we cannot but be uneasy, so v. 4. *While we are in this Tabernacle, we groan being burthened*, στενάζομεν, the same Word with this in the Text; we are streightned, and pressed with the Burthen of present Misery.

*Earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our House which is from Heaven : The House from Heaven, or of Heaven, ἐκ οὐρανόων, of heavenly Materials. It stands opposed to the earthly House in the former Verse ; and signifies the heavenly State and Glory immediately upon the Dissolution of the present Tabernacle ; and compleatly at the Resurrection, when our Bodies will be suitable to the heavenly State, and the glorified Soul. The Apostle uses the Metaphor of a House and Cloathing all through this Context : The Body is considered as the Tabernacle and Garment of the Soul. And we are clothed upon with the heavenly House. Some Interpreters incline to think the Apostle looked upon the Coming of Christ as not far off ; and that he desires in this Expression, not to put off the Body, but to be, as it were, clothed upon the Body, or have it superinduced, ἐπευδύσασθαι ; the Word alludes to an upper Garment, which is put over another, which seems favoured by v. 3. If so be that being clothed, we shall not be found naked ; or without any Body at all, as those in the State of the Dead till the Resurrection. And, v. 4. Not that we would be unclothed, divested of the Body, but clothed upon. Which is agreeable to what he says of them, who shall remain at the Coming of Christ, that they shall not sleep, but shall be changed.*

1 Cor. xv.  
55.

And



And this he *earnestly desired*: He not only *groaned*, but *earnestly desired*: The one respects the Uneasiness under which he laboured in this mortal and bodily State: The other the *heavenly House* which he expected to be clothed with. And so it is as if he had said; In this Body we labour under constant Uneasiness of one Kind or another, which makes us groan for Deliverance and Release: And we earnestly desire to be better clothed, even with the incorruptible and heavenly Glory; the proper Perfection of Soul and Body. *We groan within our selves, waiting for the Adoption, to wit, the Redemption of our Bodies.* Rom. viii. 23.

The Apostle in these Words expresses the Temper of a sincere Christian in a double View.

I. In their *Groans* while they are in the Body under present Uneasiness.

II. In their *Desires* of the heavenly Blessedness.

I shall a little distinctly represent them both, and briefly apply them in the Close.

I. We are to consider a Christian's *Groans* while he is in the Body under present Uneasiness. *In this we groan.* And *while we are in this Tabernacle we groan being burthened.* There are several Things which render the bodily State uneasy to sincere Christians;

Christians ; and to which the bodily Nature much contributes. I shall reduce them to two principal Heads : 1. To what the Body is the more immediate *Seat* and Subject of. 2. To what it further *occasions* to the Soul.

§. 1. As to what the Body is the more immediate *Seat* and Subject of. Of this Kind we may consider the following Instances.

1. The *Weakness* and *Disorder* of the bodily Nature. It is naturally frail and mortal, and gradually decays and moulders away, tho' no Disease or Accident befall it. It cannot endure long by its own Make, and has the Principles of Decay within it self. It is a *House of Clay*, whose *Foundations are in the Dust* ; and an *earthly Vessel*, which is soon broke, tho' it have no Blow, or Crack : As a weak crazy Building, wears out, and falls down at length, tho' it is not shattered, or blown down by a stormy Wind.

But besides, it is liable to many *Disorders* : And considering the Contexture of a human Body ; the Variety and Fineness of many of its Parts, and the necessary Connexion and Order of the whole ; it is a great Wonder it is not oftner out of Frame, and sooner dissolved : As a single Wheel or Pin of a Watch, out of order, disturbs the whole Motion.

How many Distempers is the bodily Nature liable to ? Every Member of the Body  
is

is subject to its proper Disease, and sometimes many of them affect us at once. How much pining and dying *Sickness*, which creates loathing of proper Food, fainting of Spirit, sinking of Nature under its Burthen; which gives a Disrelish to all the Comforts of Life, and a continual Restlessness in every Posture and every Place? How many acute and violent *Pains*, which humble the stoutest Heart, and break the strongest Constitution; when Nature is set upon the Rack, and all its Powers stretched to the utmost, and ready to crack and fly? And Nature grieved and oppressed, must needs groan and complain, when it is either pining under languishing *Sickness*, or smarting under the Torment of Pain. Holy *Job* was not Impatient under all his Miseries, till the Devil obtained Leave to *touch his Bone and his Flesh*, and *smite him with sore Boils*. The Disorders of the Body made the *patientest* Man on Earth, *curse his Day*. And *Job* iii. 1. the *Psalmist* complains upon this Account; O Lord, *heal me for my Bones are vexed*, *I am weary with my groaning*. *Psal.* vi. 2, 6.

2. *Weariness of Labour*. The Christian Life is a State of *Warfare*, as well as *Service*, and there are many Difficulties attend it in either Consideration. Every Christian is a listed *Soldier* under the Banner of Christ, the *Captain of his Salvation*; and stands obliged to *endure Hardness*, and *fight the good fight of Faith*: He must fight his  
Way

Way to Heaven through great Oppositions of his spiritual Enemies. We *wrestle with Principalities and Powers*, as well as *with Flesh and Blood*, and are engaged in a close Conflict, and constant Contention ; and must either conquer or be undone. We *run* as those in a *Race*, and must *so run as that we may obtain*, and win the glorious Prize. We must *forget the Things which are behind* ; and *reach forth to the Things which are before* ; and *press forward to the Mark* : Which are Allusions to the *Olympick Games* among the *Greeks*, and import great Earnestness and Contention of Mind. We must *strive to enter in at the strait Gate*, and *strive against Sin* : We must *give all Diligence* to add to our Graces, and *make our Calling and Election sure* ; and be found in the daily Performance of the difficult Duties of *Self-denial*, *Mortification*, and *crucifying the World* ; crossing and restraining bodily Appetites and Interest ; and using, upon proper Occasions, *Watching*, and *Fasting*, and *Prayer*.

Now as *much Study is a Weariness to the Flesh*, so constant Labour breeds a Weariness. There is the Toil and Fatigue of Duty, as well as the Comfort and Refreshment of it ; and tho' a Christian is not weary of Duty, and never says with the formal *Jews*, *What a Weariness is it ?* Yet he is often weary in Duty, and finds his Spirits flag and faint : The Spirit is willing, *but the*

Phil. iii.

13.

Mat. xxvi.

41.



*the Flesh is weak*, as it was with the Disci-  
 ples themselves; and the Apostle *served the*  
*Lord with many Fears and Temptations* Acts xx.  
*which beset him*; and they are said to rest<sup>19.</sup>  
*from their Labours* hereafter, upon this Ac-<sup>Rev. xiv.</sup>  
 count.<sup>13.</sup>

3. *The Afflictions and Sufferings of Life.*  
 We are liable to many Accidents of Evil  
 and Calamities of Life, in this open State,  
 which affect and grieve the bodily Nature:  
 The *Psalmist* complains of his *broken Bones*.  
 Many groan under the Streights of Poverty,  
 or Distress of Want; and are glad of the  
 meanest Refreshment from others Superflui-  
 ties: As *Lazarus* lay at the rich Man's Door<sup>Luke xvi.</sup>  
*full of Sores, desiring to be fed with the*<sup>20, 21.</sup>  
*Crumbs which fell from his Table.*

But the Case of this Kind particularly re-  
 ferred to in the Context is that of *Persecu-*  
*tion: We are troubled on every Side—per-*  
*plexed—persecuted—always bearing a-*  
*bout in our Bodies the Dying of the Lord*<sup>Chap. iv. 8.</sup>  
*Jesus.* This was frequently the Case of  
 the first Christians: *The World hated them*  
*because they were not of the World, but*  
*chosen out of it*; i. e. of quite another Spi-  
 rit and Design: And they felt the Marks of  
 their Hatred and Ill-will in various Instances:  
*Bonds and Imprisonments did abide them*  
*in every Place*; and they were sometimes  
*stoned, sawn asunder, slain with the Sword,*  
*wandred in Sheep-skins, and Goat-skins, be-*<sup>Heb. xi. 37.</sup>  
*ing destitute, afflicted, tormented.*

B

And

- And he who will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer Persecution in one Kind or other from a wicked World: Every Christian is obliged to *take up the Cross and follow Christ*; and to be content thro' many Tribulations to enter into the Kingdom. He must stand the Shock of Injury and Violence, as well as Dishonour and Reproach, and be prepared in the Temper and Purpose of his Heart, to lay down his Life, as well as to suffer the Loss of all. And this is a hard saying to Flesh and Blood; and no Wonder if Nature shrink and recoil under so great a Pressure; tho' the Power of divine Grace, and extraordinary Succours, have sometimes enabled them, not only to endure them with Patience; but to rejoice and glory in them too.

4 The *Dissolution* of the bodily Frame. There is a natural Love in the Soul to the Body, arising from the close Union, and long Intimacy together. The Body is one Part of our Constitution, and too often pampered and indulged; and Death which is the Separation of Soul and Body, and a rending the two Parts asunder, must needs be grievous; for it is the Destruction of our present Nature, and *dissolving the House of our Tabernacle*. And there cannot but be the natural Horror of Dying in the Minds of good Men, tho' they are delivered by Christ from the Bondage of sinful Fear; as old Friends part with Regret, who shall see one another's Faces no more. And

And sometimes the *actual* Dissolution is painful : It puts Nature into Agonies and Convulsions, and extorts, in a literal Sense, many deep Groans : Especially in vigorous Youth, and strong Constitutions, it is the hardest Conflict of their whole Lives. The Struggles of dissolving Nature are often terrible, and prove grievous and insupportable to Standers by. The Apostle speaks of *loosing the Pains of Death*; the Pangs and Throws which Death occasions, as our Translators plainly understood it. Sometimes the *Tenderness* of dear Relations wound them deep, and make them ready to say, *What mean you to weep and to break my Heart?* And this is the common Lot of fallen Nature, and the fixed Appointment of Heaven, to which the whole human Race is subject, and there is *no Discharge from this Warfare*. Acts ii. 24.  
Acts xiii. 21.

§. 2. What the Body may farther *occasion* to the Soul. And it several Ways occasions Uneasiness.

1. It is a great *Hindrance* to our spiritual Attainments, and to all our Improvements in Knowledge and Grace. Our Bodies are like a dark *Veil* over our Souls, or a dead *Weight* hanging upon them, when they aspire and ascend upward. The Care of the bodily Welfare, and the Violence of bodily Appetite, often divert and mislead us, and indispose for the diligent Pursuit of Knowledge, and the vigorous Exercise of Grace. When *Martha* was *cumbered with much*

*erving, and careful and troubled with many Things* ; she neglected the *one Thing needful*, and the *better Part*, i.e. the great Opportunity of saving Instruction, and spiritual Improvement, by the Presence and Conversation of Christ.

How often do the *Necessities* and *Pleasures* of the bodily Life hinder a serious Attendance on Means, and a wise Improvement of Opportunities : How often disturb and interrupt the close Attention, and retired Exercise of our Souls : Cramp and confine our Views ; and check the rising Motions, and noble Ambition of our Minds ? We are apt to indulge to Sloth, and *spare our selves*, and regret the necessary Pains of higher Improvement. We find a great deal of Darkness and Disorder, not only from the Carelessness and Inadvertence, the Prejudice and Prepossession of our Minds ; but from the Working of our Passions, and Gratifications of Sense, under all the Means of Knowledge, and all the Helps afforded us.

By this Means we are kept low in our Attainments : *We know but in part* what we ought to know, and our little Knowledge often *puffs us up*. We are but of *little Faith*, and often *stagger through Unbelief* under a difficult Trial, or dark Appearance of Things ; and find Reason to say, *Lord, I believe, help thou mine Unbelief*. We *love but little*, tho' much has been forgiven us. The *Fear of Man* often proves a Snare,  
and



and prevails against the Fear of God. We experience a Weakness in our Powers, and unsuitableness of Temper in holy Exercises; and easily lose the good Impressions, and find an Abatement of spiritual Vigour, in the most solemn Ordinances, and most composed Frame. And a sincere Christian who loves God with all his Heart, and values his Image as the greatest Good; who designs his own Improvement under all the Means of Grace, and aims at perfect Conformity to God; can't but be grieved under the Sense of his low Attainments in the Christian Life, and faint Resemblance of God. The Weakness of their Grace, and Imperfection of their Service, are great Articles of Uneasiness and Complaint.

2. It is a great Occasion of *Sin*, as well as of Imperfection. The original Depravation by the Fall is much interwoven with the bodily Constitution, and by the Laws of Union between the Body and Soul, the one is much affected by the other. The *Unweildiness* and *Disorder* of our bodily Nature betrays us into a great deal of Guilt. We indulge to many sinful Gratifications, and sinful Neglects, by bodily Appetite and Inclination, and bodily Ease and Convenience; and the Body is often made not only the *Occasion*, but the *Instrument* of Sin. *We yield our Members Instruments of Un-* Rom. vi.  
*righteousness unto Sin.* We find a *List-* 13.  
*lessness* and Weariness in holy Duties; the  
Exercise

Exercise of unruly Passions which are often troublesome, and difficultly restrained; the Power of our peculiar and special Corruption, which may be called *our own Iniquity*; and the *Sin which does so easily beset us*; the frequent Prevalence of a carnal, or worldly Mind, innumerable Follies and Escapes of Life; and sometimes grosser Neglects and Commission of Sin. There are many Workings of Corruption after all the Influences of divine Grace, and all our Watchfulness and Care. And sometimes fresh Occasions give a Revival to a latent Corruption, and renew the spiritual Combat; and a good Man's Soul is made the Seat of War, and Stage of continual Conflict:

Gal. v. 17. *The Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh.* How often do Christians complain, that they are not what they would be, and cannot do as they would:

Rom. vii. 19, 21. *For the Good that I would, I do not; and the Evil that I would not, that I do. I find a Law that when I would do Good, Evil is present with me. And again; I find a Law in my Members warring against*  
 — 23. *the Law in my Mind, and bringing me in-*  
*to Captivity.* The Body of Death hangs about them, and cleaves to them, like a dead Body to a living Soul. The holy Apostle never complained of any of his Sufferings,

— 24. *as he did upon this Occasion: O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from this Body of Death!* And no wonder a sanctified

sanctified Soul is *weary and heavy laden* with the Sense of Sin, and heartily grieved and uneasy with so disagreeable a Mixture.

The *sensible* World round about us powerfully strikes our sensible Natures, and proves a dangerous Share. How often are we insnared and entangled by sensible Good? There is something suitable to all our Senses, and proper to affect us every Way: The *Last of the Flesh*, and the *Lust of the Eyes*, <sup>1 John ii.</sup> and the *Pride of Life*, are suitable Baits to <sup>16.</sup> all the Powers of the bodily Nature. And how difficult does it become to preserve our Integrity in the midst of perpetual Snares, and to *keep our selves unspotted from the World?*

Besides, it gives a great Advantage to the Devil's *Temptations*. We read of a *Messenger of Satan* sent to *buffet* the Apostle, and it was by a *Thorn in the Flesh*; by <sup>2 Cor. xii.</sup> which some understand some painful bodily <sup>7.</sup> *Distemper*; and others a violent *Temptation*. This reduced him to a great Distress, and made him *cry thrice* to the Lord for Help. The Devil takes the Advantage of our bodily Make, whether sanguine, or melancholy; and knows how to apply himself suitably to the different *Temperature* of the Body, and Circumstance of Things about us; and is too often successful to draw us into Sin, or disturb us in the Performance of Duty; to perplex our Minds with Doubts and Fears, and destroy our Comfort and Peace.

And



And this is sometimes aggravated by the Offence to God, and the Marks of his Displeasure. He is provoked to suspend his gracious Influence, and with-hold the *Light of his Countenance*, and former *Manifestations of himself* unto them. A thick Cloud gathers round about their Soul, and there appears nothing but Frowns and Displeasure. They groan sometimes under the Sense of divine Anger, as well as Departure from them : So holy *Job, The Arrows of the*

Job vi. 4. *Almighty are within me, the Poison thereof drinketh up my Spirit, the Terrors of the Lord have set themselves in Array against me.* And the *Psalmist* often complains upon this Account in a very awful and affecting Manner ; *Thy Arrows stick fast in me,*

*Pfalm*

*xxxviii. 2,*

*3.*

*and thy Hand presseth me sore ; there is no Soundness in my Flesh because of thy Anger.—I have roared because of the Disquiet of my Heart.* The Anguish of his Mind disturbed all his Repose, and affected

*Pfalm xiii.*

*1.*

*his bodily Health. And again, How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord, for ever ; how long wilt thou hide thy Face from me ?*

He thought it exceeding long ; and looked upon it as a kind of Eternity, a Duration which would never end. He speaks as one almost in Despair ; *Wilt thou cast off for*

*Pfalm*

*lxxvii. 7, 1.*

*ever, wilt thou be favourable no more ; is his Mercy clean gone for ever ; hath God forgotten to be gracious ; hath he in Anger shut up his tender Mercies ?* And this of all other



other Things is most grievous to an holy Soul, who loves God above all, and places his chiefest Happiness in his Favour. The Frowns of an angry and displeased Father cannot but give a gloomy Sadness, and pungent Grief to every Child of God.

3. It exposes them to many *Troubles*. How many Calamities befall us by Accident or Violence; by the Hand of Providence, or our own Mistake; which create us great Uneasiness in this bodily State? Many Difficulties rise up every Step of our Way, and in all the Affairs of Life. We are often crossed in our best Designs, and disappointed in our most pleasing Hopes; Things prove otherwise than we wish after all our Cares and Precaution. *Man who is born of a* Job xiv. 1. *Woman is of few Days, and full of Trou-*—v. 7. *ble; and born to Trouble as the Sparks fly upwards.* This World is the Element of Trouble: Labour and Sorrow is a part of the original Curse, and the proper State of fallen Nature.

And whilst we dwell in this bodily State, and stand allied to the World about us; we cannot but be affected with the Case of *Others*, as well as of our *Own*. The frequent Disorders and Disturbance in the Course of *publick Affairs*, in which every Man's Interest is concerned, often occasion *great Thoughts of Heart*. The Case of the *Church of God*, especially under violent *Persecutions*, or great *Degeneracy*, is a very melancholly

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Reflec-

Reflection to a good Man's Soul. His *Heart trembles because of the Ark of God*; and he is *grieved for the Afflictions of Joseph*; and is sometimes ready to say, in the deep Concern of his Soul; *Can these dry Bones live? What wilt thou do for thy great Name? By whom shall Jacob arise for he is small?* Lord, what will become of the rising Generation? Which way will God give a Revival to the truly Christian Interest among us? When shall there be greater Light, and Purity; greater Truth and Sincerity; greater Peace and Love in the Christian World? How often do the Weakness and Follies, the Rashness and Mistakes of good Men; the open and daring Impieties of wicked Men; the Contempt of divine Authority, and divine Revelations; the Formality and Worldliness of Mind; the careless Neglects, and cold Indifference; the Uncharitableness and Animosity, among the Professors of Religion; afflict their Souls, and make them say in a serious Retirement; *Woe is me that I sojourn in Mesheck, and dwell in the Tents of Kedar?* How sensibly touched was the holy *Psalmist* with this Affliction when he says; *Rivers of Tears run down my Eyes, because*

Psal. cxix.  
136.

*they keep not thy Law?* The Apostle tells the *Philippians* weeping, of the sensual and worldly *Enemies of the Cross of Christ*:

18.

And just *Lot vexed his righteous Soul from Day to Day with their unlawful Deeds.*

1 Pet. ii. 8.

We

We often groan under the Sense of other Men's *Afflictions*, when it may be, we have none of our own ; if ever we are so happy ; and are called to *weep with them who weep, and mourn with them who mourn*. The Distresses of those about us, and who are dear to us, is often a sensible Grief to a tender and generous Soul. God himself is represented as being *afflicted in the Afflictions of his People*: And the holy Apostle could say ; *Who is weak, and I am not* <sup>2 Cor. xi.</sup> *weak ; who is offended, and I burn not ?* <sup>29.</sup>

But of all the Troubles of this mortal State, nothing is more grievous than the *Death* of our Friends: When we are called to part with an old Companion of our Lives ; a dear and intimate Friend, in whom we placed a Confidence, and took Delight ; where there has been a long Acquaintance, and great Endearment ; and many Ties of mutual Kindness: This is a sad Interruption to all our Pleasures, and abates the Relish of every other Enjoyment. It is a bitter Allay to all the Sweets of Life ; and wrings many a Tear from our Eyes, and many a Groan from our Heart: We *mourn and refuse to be comforted, because they are not*. For what is the World when our *Friends* are removed out of it, and we are left as it were, to converse with *Strangers* ?

4. The necessary *Distance* and Absence from the Lord. The Apostle distinguishes and opposes these two: He sets the



bodily Life in this World in Opposition to being with Christ, v. 6. *Knowing that while we are at Home in the Body, we are absent from the Lord; and v. 8. Willing rather to be absent from the Body, and present with the Lord.* And he was in a Strait upon this Account, *Having a desire to depart, and be with Christ.* We must depart from hence, before we can be with the Lord; and quit the Body, before we can be in Heaven. There is no entering within the Vail till we are *unbodied*; we drop the Body in the Dust in our Ascent to Heaven; for *Flesh and Blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of Heaven; nor Corruption inherit Incorruption.*

And to them who *love the Lord Jesus Christ in Sincerity*, and place their Happiness in being with him; it cannot but be an Uneasiness to be long absent and separate from him. *Hope deferred makes the Heart sick*; and the very Posture of Expectation has something uneasy in it. While they are long *waiting for the Son of God from Heaven, and love his Appearance*; they are sometimes ready to tire and faint with the Length of the Delay, and to say with the Mother of Sisera, *Why is his Chariot so long in coming?* And with the Church; *Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.* The Strength of their Faith, and Warmth of their Desire, may reduce them to an uneasy Strait, especially when their Capacities



ties of Service are much abated, and their Opportunities more confined. The clearer Prospects, and fuller Assurance, and more lively Foretast of the heavenly Glory, make them more heartily weary of the World, and unwillingly absent from the Lord; even when they have least Trouble and Suffering from it; or enjoy the greatest Abundance of its Blessings.

II. I am to consider a Christian's *Desires* of the heavenly Happiness. *He earnestly desires to be clothed upon with his House which is from Heaven*, i. e. To be possess'd of the heavenly Glory in the immediate Presence of Christ; and the future Glories of the Resurrection. But why does a Christian so earnestly desire it; and what Account can be given of it?

§. 1. There is the Weight of their present *Burthens*. They not only *groan but desire*; and their Groanings breed Desires. Oppressed Nature longs for Rest; and tho' every Christian has not all the Reasons of Uneasiness before mentioned, and some have much more of them than others; yet all have some; and commonly many of them: And the more of them fall to their Share, and the more uneasy they are made by them; the more they desire Deliverance and Ease. So that all the Instances of present Grief which make them groan, are so many Reasons of their earnest Desire, and make them long the more for Heaven. It would

would be strangely *Unnatural* to suppose them easy under so many Weights, and not to feel the Burthen which often lies so heavy, or not desire Release.

§. 2. The *Excellency* of the heavenly State, or the *Object* of their Desires. Every Thing ought to be desired in Proportion to its *Degrees* of Excellence, and what is really valuable and lovely in it. The Apostle here particularly describes it. He calls it the *House from Heaven*; so it is opposed to the *earthly House of this Tabernacle*. The present Body is *Earthly* in its Original and Make, and in its Tendency and Issue: It is a *Tabernacle of Clay whose Foundation is in the Dust*; and will *return to the Dust from whence it was*. But the other will be a *heavenly House*; a *House from Heaven*, or of a heavenly Make and Materials; suitable to the heavenly State, and glorified Soul. In the former Verse, it is a *Building of God*; a divine Building, framed, and reared by the Hand of God. He is the Author and Efficient of it; and the Workmanship must be answerable to its Author; the Effect suitable to its Cause; that is, most Excellent and Perfect in its Kind; for *all his Works are perfect*. And, *it is not made with Hands*, like other Houses which partake of the Frailty and Weakness of the Maker, and are attended with Imperfection and Inconvenience. And *it is eternal in the Heavens*: An House of a  
lasting

lasting Nature, and endless Duration, which will never perish and decay; and will never be dissolved and taken down. Our Lord speaks of *many Mansions in his Father's House*: As if every Believer would have a distinct Abode of Rest and Blessedness: Or they were to be disposed of in several Apartments suitable to their different State and Improvement in this World. John xiv.

In Verse 4, he speaks of being *clothed upon*, or covered all over with it; and *Mortality being swallowed up of Life*. And elsewhere, *This Mortal shall put on Immortality*; and *Death be swallowed up in Victory*: Death will be utterly *abolished*, as an antiquated Thing, quite out of Date; and there will be *no more any Death*, as there will be *no more any Pain*. Even the mortal Part, or what was before Mortal of us, will become Immortal.

He represents the future State by a *Presence with Christ*: *Present with the Lord*. We shall be brought into the immediate Presence of Christ, and Sight of his Glory; for *we shall be with him where he is, and behold his Glory*. And the immediate Sight of the glorified Redeemer will transform our Souls into a perfect Likeness to him, and fill them with unspeakable Satisfaction and Joy. *When he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is*: John iii.  
and if now tho' we see him not, yet be-  
lieving; how much more when we see him,



1 Pet. i. 9. him, shall we *rejoice with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory*? And how Natural is it to desire so great a Good; and to long for such a *State and Presence*, so different from our present State, and so every way Desirable and Excellent? It is a greater Wonder, in a just Estimate of Things, that Christians who have the *Hope of Heaven*, have no more of the *Joy of Hope*, and find no more warm and vigorous Desires of so perfectly excellent and agreeable a Good: That the *far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory* does not make Heaven more desirable, as well as *present Afflictions light*; that we can endure Life so easily, and bear so long an Absence with Patience. Especially if we add

§. 3. The peculiar *Temper* of a Christian's Mind with Reference to it. This is particularly described by the Apostle in this noble Context: I shall consider the *Force* of the several Expressions, and represent the genuine *Temper* of a real Christian with Reference to the heavenly State. And tho' every one does not actually possess it, in the same *Degree* the Apostle did; yet the *Prevalence* of such a Temper is *essential* to the Christian State; and the higher Measures of it, what every Christian is obliged to design and aim at.

1. He describes it by their *Faith* of the heavenly Blessedness. This he expresses in v. 1. by Knowledge. *We know that when*  
the



*the earthly House of this Tabernacle is dissolved, we have a Building of God.* And again, v. 6. *Knowing that while we are at home in the Body, we are absent from the Lord.* *eidōles*: knowing or considering it. But how did he know it? Not by *Sight*; for it is invisible: Not by any of his *Senses*; for it is out of the Reach of them all: But by *Faith*, which is the *Evidence of Things not seen*: There is an *Evidence* in Faith with respect to unseen Things. Faith is never unreasonable, but always the highest Reason. The Apostle says, *We have known and believed*: And with Reference to this very Case he says in v. 7. *We walk by Faith, not by Sight.* Heb. xi. 5.

We know it by Faith in the *Promise* of God, which is the *Reason* and *Measure* of Faith: And therefore the Apostle says, *In hope of eternal Life which God who can not lie hath promised.* This is the true Temper of a Christian's Mind, to believe the Promise of God, and rely upon his Faithfulness: *They have not seen, and yet believe*: And *whom having not seen, yet believing.* They know there is such a glorious and excellent State, upon the Foundation of the divine Promise, with far greater Certainty, than they believe upon credible Report, there are such distant Countries, which they have never seen; and which yet no Man pretends to doubt of. Tit. i. 2.  
John xx.  
1<sup>st</sup> Pet. i. 8.

A Christian is able upon this Principle to say ; “ I am fully perswaded and satisfied of  
 “ the *Truth* of the heavenly State ; and of  
 “ a future Happiness after Death ; and a  
 “ glorious Exchange of the Body for the  
 “ Lord : If I am a true Believer I shall cer-  
 “ tainly *enter into his Glory*, and be admit-  
 “ ted to a State of immediate Enjoyment  
 “ upon the Dissolution of my present Frame.”  
 They desire it upon certain *Knowledge*, and  
 firm *Faith* of it ; not by uncertain *Report*,  
 or mere probable *Conjecture*. Hereupon

2. There is their *Preparation* for it. This  
 we have v. 5. *Now he who hath wrought  
 us for the self same Thing is God, who  
 hath also given to us the Earnest of his Spi-  
 rit.* He hath wrought us for it, *i. e.* He  
 hath fitted us for this immortal State, fram-  
 ed our Minds suitable to it, and given a  
 Disposition and Make of Soul agreeable to  
 that glorious Place, and the noble Exercise  
 and Enjoyments of it. They have a hea-  
 venly Mind and Temper, and are *made meet  
 to be Partakers of the Inheritance in Light.*  
 The *Form* of the Expression is designed to  
 shew the Greatness of the Work, from the  
 Consideration of the Author of it : *He who  
 hath wrought us—is God*, q. d. This is  
 the Work of a God ; an Act of divine  
 Power. None but God is able to do so  
 great a Thing, to fit an apostate Soul for Hea-  
 ven : It is the *Working of his mighty Power  
 to us ward who believe.*

Eph. i. 19.

He

He adds, *Who hath also given us the Earnest of his Spirit*, or the Pledge of Enjoyment. The sanctifying Work of the divine Spirit in preparing us for the heavenly State ; and his abiding Presence with us ; is also an Earnest of Enjoyment : For why are we fitted for it at so great an Expence of Power ; but to possess it ? Shall so great a Preparation be lost, and prove in vain ? In this Sense we are also said to be *sealed by him unto the Day of Redemption*. And how natural is it to a renewed Soul, and one *born from above*, to tend thither, and desire to be *clothed with the House from Heaven* ; who both finds a *Suitableness*, and possesses the *Earnest* of it ? Who is satisfied of his *Title* by his present *Preparation* ? Who can say, *I am perswaded that neither Death nor Life—nor any other Creature shall be able to separate us from the Love of God in Christ Jesus*. And I know in <sup>Rom. viii. 38.</sup> *whom I have believed, and am perswaded* <sup>2 Tim. i. 12.</sup> *that what I have committed to him, he is able also to keep unto that Day*.

3. Their *Courage*, or Fortitude of Mind. This is mentioned in v. 6. *Therefore we are confident—knowing that while we are at home in the Body, we are absent from the Lord*. And in v. 8. *We are confident I say ;* *Σαγῆς*, the Word don't import *Perswasion* or Assurance of Mind, as our Translation would incline one to think ; but plainly *Courage* or Boldness ; an undaunted Spirit,

fearless of Danger. It manifestly respects, as appears by the Connection, the Difficulty of Dying, or parting with the Body. The Case is plainly this ; Death stands in the Way to Heaven, and we must pass thro' the Grave to the Mansions of Glory. Death with all its Terrors must be first encountered and overcome ; the present *Tabernacle* must be *dissolved*, and we must be *absent from the Body* before we can be present *with the Lord*. Why now, says the Apostle, we have Courage, and are of good Heart ; we don't flinch, or shrink from the Danger. We have *Bravery* sufficient to support our Minds in the Prospects and Conflicts with Death ; we *dare* to die, rather than not *be with the Lord*.

Tho' Death is naturally frightful, and is never Desirable for it self, for it is the greatest natural Evil : Yet it may be very reasonably so, as it stands connected with something else, and is considered by us as the necessary Passage to eternal Life. So that a Christian can say ; “ Tho' ten thousand  
 “ Deaths stood in the Way to the Presence  
 “ of Christ, and Enjoyment of Heaven ;  
 “ I would venture thro' them all, rather than  
 “ be for ever detained, and kept from them.  
 “ Tho' I walk thro' the Valley of the Sha-  
 “ dow of Death, yet will I fear no Evil,  
 “ for thou art with me. I have got rid of  
 “ the Bondage of the fear of Death ; and  
 “ am waiting for my appointed Change,  
 “ and



“ and the *Appearance of my Lord.*” Here-  
upon there is

4. *Complacency, or Willingness.* This the Apostle adds in v. 8. *We are confident I say, and willing rather to be absent from the Body, and present with the Lord.* Not only Confident, or Courageous, with respect to the Difficulties in the Way; but *willing rather.* The Sense hardly appears in our Translation: The Word *ἑδοξάμεν* signifies Complacency, or being *well pleased.* It is the same Word which is often used of the *good Pleasure* of God. The Sense is;  
 “ We have a Complacency of Mind, or  
 “ Relish of Delight in the Fore-thoughts of  
 “ the heavenly State, and the Expectation  
 “ of the *House from Heaven.* We pre-  
 “ fer it to Life it self; and choose rather to  
 “ be *absent from the Body,* that we may  
 “ be *present with the Lord.* We have na-  
 “ tural Inclinations to the Body, and can’t  
 “ but love what is a Part of our selves: We  
 “ could be content to dwell in the Body as  
 “ well as other Men, if that would consist  
 “ with our proper Happiness: But now,  
 “ in the present State and Consideration of  
 “ the Case, and taking the Thing as it real-  
 “ ly stands; we *rather* incline the other  
 “ Way, and our stronger Propensity is to  
 “ leave it. This is what we approve in our  
 “ deliberate Judgment of Things: We are  
 “ *willing* to die, for the sake of being with  
 “ the Lord.”

†

And

And this arose to such a Pitch in the holy Apostle, that he was reduced to a Strait : *I Phil. i. 28. am in a Strait betwixt two, having a Desire to depart, and be with Christ, which is far better.* His Willingness of further Service to the Church ; and his Desire of being with Christ, press'd hard on either Side : Only with this Difference, that *others Good* made him content to live ; his *own Desires* were to depart, and That he accounted *far better.* And can they do otherwise than earnestly desire what is so agreeable and pleasing to them ; and what they manifestly choose and prefer ? They cannot but desire what is of all other Things most *Pleasurable* to their Souls, and the proper Satisfaction of their highest Hopes. Add to this

5. Their constant *Endeavours.* This we find in v. 9. *Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent we may be accepted of him :* ἐν αὐτῷ, well-pleasing to him, and approved of him. His Favour is our Happiness Living and Dying ; in this World, and in the other. Now, says the Apostle, we *labour*, or we endeavour : “ This is our  
 “ main View, and constant Care in all we  
 “ do ; what we make the Drift and Design  
 “ of our whole Lives, and to which we re-  
 “ fer every other Thing. This is the End  
 “ of all our Endeavours and Diligence in  
 “ the Christian Life ; of all our Attendance  
 “ on Duties and Use of Means ; for this  
 we

“ we strive, and watch and pray.” So he had said in the last Verse of the foregoing Chapter: *We look at the Things which are not seen, for they are eternal*: σκοπέειντων, This is our *Scope*; the Center of our Endeavours, and the Mark at which we always aim. And he speaks in this Sense of, *Seeking Glory and Honour and Immortality*; and, *seeking another Country, that is, a heavenly One*; which plainly imports the Bent and Drift of their Course and Walk.

I shall only further observe, That the Word also imports Ambition, φιλοτιμέμεθα; and it is as if he had said; “ This is the  
 “ highest *Honour* of which we are ambiti-  
 “ ous, and what we propose as the proper  
 “ *Prize*. We esteem the Favour and Ac-  
 “ ceptance of God as the highest Point of  
 “ Honour; and value his Approbation and  
 “ Well-pleasedness with us above the high-  
 “ est Opinion of Men, and the greatest  
 “ worldly Advancement.” The Apostle could say; *But with me it is a very small Thing that I should be judged of you, or* <sup>1</sup> Cor. iv. *of Man's Judgment—but he who judgeth*<sup>3</sup>  
*me is the Lord*: “ Let me stand right in  
 “ his Account, tho' all the World condemna  
 “ me; let me be approved of my proper  
 “ Judge, and I value not the Censures and  
 “ Reproach of Men.” And can they chuse but desire what is the *End of their Faith*, or Christian Course; the very Design and Business of their whole Lives to attain; and  
 what

what they value and regard above every outward Good ?

III. I shall close this Subject with two or three *practical Remarks* very briefly.

1. We may learn from hence, the *Nature* of the present State. It is made up, according to this Account of it, of *Groans* and *Desires* : We groan under present Burthens, and desire a future Happiness. The one is the Fruit of *fallen* Nature, the other of the renewed Nature. The one is the Effect of the *Curse* ; the other of divine *Grace*. This is the State of the Christian Life in this World ; it is a State of Trial and Conflict, and of Preparation and Expectation. We are either groaning under our Burthens, or longing and wishing for Rest. So little Reason have we to be fond of the *Body* which gives us so much Uneasiness ; or to take up our Rest in this *World* which is not our Happiness.

2. The *Difference* between sincere Christians and other Men. They groan under their present Burthens indeed, and have sometimes a larger Share than other Men : But then they have their Desires too ; they *earnestly desire their House from Heaven*. And it is a great Allay under our present Burthens and Sorrows, to have the Hopes of the heavenly Rest and Joy.

But now wicked Men have Groans without Desires : They groan under present Burthens too ; but have no Desires of the heavenly



venly State. They enjoy only the Good of this bodily Life and State, and that is often mixed with Grief and Groans; and they have no Comfort under their Troubles, but what this World can give them; no *Desires of a House from Heaven*, nor Faith and Fitness for the heavenly State. When they quit the Body and leave the World, they lose all the Good they shall ever have; for their *Portion is in this Life*, and they *have their Reward here*. So that their Case comes to this: They enjoy their present Good with many *Groans*, and leave it at last for *eternal Sorrows*.

3. We should look well to our *Interest* in the heavenly Glory. We *groan* under present Burthens; this is the common Lot of fallen Nature, and we find it true by sad Experience. But have we earnest *Desires* of Heaven? We must quickly be *unclothed*: I may invert the Apostle's Words; *The Day is far spent* with many of us, the *Night is at hand*. Death will strip us of all our present Enjoyments, and of our bodily Nature: Can we warrantably look to be *clothed upon* with the House from Heaven; and to be *received into everlasting Habitations*, when the present *Tabernacle is dissolved*?

It infinitely concerns us to consider the State we are in, as to the immortal Life of the other World; and the Evidence of our Interest. Why according to the present

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*Temper* of our Minds, such is our *State*, and such the Measure of our Hopes. I don't mean the slight and sudden Motions of Mind; the risings and workings of our Affections under the Power of present Convictions of Mind, or great Afflictions of Life: They are fleeting and deceitful; and a very uncertain and unsafe Rule of Judgment: But what is the *habitual, abiding, prevailing* Temper of our Minds. Have we the Christian Frame before described, consisting in Faith, Preparation, Courage, Complacency, and Endeavours? Be exceeding Careful not to mistake in a Matter of so great a Consequence: And let me leave this important Thought with answerable Weight upon all your Minds; that it is not *Names* and *Appearances* will fit Men for Heaven. All our Privileges and Enjoyments, all our Knowledge and Profession, will signify nothing to this Purpose, without a right Temper, and a heavenly Make of Mind. Without this we shall be found, under the greatest Advantage of Life, and highest Confidence of Mind, to have built upon a deceitful Ground; and shall meet with a sad Disappointment at last.

4. The Happiness of *departed* Saints, who are *clothed upon with their House from Heaven*, tho' the *earthly House of their Tabernacle is dissolved*. They *groaned here being burthened*: And they *earnestly desired the heavenly Rest*. And they are now de-

livered from the Burthen of the mortal Body, and all the Groans and Sorrows it occasioned. It is now with them according to their Desires : They have their own Desire : They are where they would be. They would not change Worlds back again for all the World ; or return into this frail Body, for all the Enjoyments of Life. They have the full Satisfaction of their highest Desires, and the Perfection of their Felicity and Joy. And what Comfort is this to *surviving* Friends in such a Case, to consider their Release from the Burthens of Life, and the *clothing of the heavenly House* : That they are now at perfect Ease, and *in Fulness of Joy* ; and that *Mortality is swallowed up of Life*.

And this leads me to speak of my deceased Friend and Brother, the Reverend Mr. *John Billingsley* ; in whom both Parts of the Text were literally fulfilled : He *groaned* under the Burthen of the mortal Body ; and *earnestly desired the House from Heaven*. I shall give you this short Account and Character of him ; and shall prescribe this Law to my self ; to say nothing but what I believe is True of him, and may be for the Edification of others.

He was born at *Chesterfield* in *Darbyshire*, and was the Son of the ejected Minister of that Place ; a Person of great Piety and Worth ; and a dear and intimate Friend of



Vid. p. the late Excellent Mr. *Matt. Silvester*. We  
 169. Vol. have a particular Account of him in Dr. *Ca-*  
 2. *lamy's* Abridgment; and an handsome La-  
 tin Epitaph drawn up by his Son.

Our Mr. *Billingsley* was first admitted a Member of *Trinity-College* in *Cambridge*; and when neither his Inclination, nor Circumstance, allowed his longer Continuance there, he was placed under the Care of the famous Mr. *Reyner* of *Lincoln*; and had considerable Assistance afterward from his worthy Father, and his Uncle *Whitlock* of *Nottingham*. He was ordained to the Ministry by Fasting and Prayer, and Imposition of Hands by his Father, the eminent Mr. *Robert Porter*, Mr. *John Oldfield*, Mr. *Edward Prime*, Mr. *William Cotes*, Names of Renown in that Country; and at the same time with Mr. *Jo. Oldfield*, Mr. *Samuel Cotes*, and Mr. *Samuel Rose*.

He entred upon the Ministry in the darkest Times of King *Charles* the Second's Reign, as several other of our worthy Brethren also did, who yet remain among us; without any Prospects of worldly Advantage, or even Opportunity of publick Service; and under the greatest Difficulties, and Discouragement. His first Services were at *Chesterfield*, on the Lord's-Day Evenings: He preached for seven Years at *Selston*, to a plain but serious Auditory; and afterward removed to *Kingston* upon *Hull*, where

where he lived ten Years with as great Usefulness, and Reputation, as any Minister in those Parts.

Soon after his coming to this City, the Providence of God directed his Settlement in this Place, with the Advice and Opinion of several worthy Ministers his particular Friends. He continued among us about fifteen Years, and preached among us, as constantly as the frequent Returns of bodily Disorder would admit. I ever esteemed him a great Blessing to the Congregation; and I believe he was thought so by every one in it. We lived together through that Course of Time in a perfect uninterrupted Friendship and Endearment: His Labours, and his Memory, will be always precious in my Account.

As to his *personal Character*; he was a Man of great *Sincerity* and Plainness of Heart; as remote from Guile and Design as any Man I ever knew so well. His Spirit was deeply *serious*; and under an habitual Awe and Reverence of God. His highest Care and Ambition was to please God, and be accepted of him in all he did. He was a *diligent* Enquirer after Knowledge, and used great Application to inform his Mind, and fit himself for his sacred Work. He was well *furnished* with the several Parts of useful *Learning*, and well acquainted with the antient and modern *Languages*, in which he took a particular Pleasure, and  
was

was a considerable Critick. He was exceeding *Humble* and Modest under all his Attainments, and had a natural Diffidence, and Distrust of himself. He was always ready to receive Light from the meanest Hand; and paid a great Deference to the Judgment and Reasons of other Men. He had learnt of his Lord to be *Meek* and *lowly of Heart*, and *lived peaceably with all Men* in the several Places of his Abode: He had a natural Aversion in all Affairs to any Methods of Violence and Wrath. He was peculiarly remarkable for *Tenderness* of Mind, and a scrupulous Conscientiousness in all his Ways. His Conversation, thro' a long Course, and many Trials, was unblameable and exemplary. In Matters of Moment, which appeared at first View to have any Difficulty; no Man was more anxiously Careful to see his Way, or more thoroughly satisfied in his deliberate Judgment about them.

His Preaching was always *Solid* and Judicious; the Result of mature Thoughts, and great Diligence. He never offered to God that which cost him nothing, or satisfied himself with sudden and loose Compo-sures; he always did his best in the Circum-stance in which he stood; and never allowed himself in idle Neglects, or unguarded Li-berties, where he apprehended the Honour of divine Truth, and the Welfare of the Souls of Men, were concerned. His Man-  
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ner was *Grave* and *Serious*; and sometimes upon awakening and important Subjects, very solemn and awful; such as exceedingly engaged the Attention, and affected the Hearts of the Hearers. His *Subjects* were the *great Things of God's Law*, and the peculiar Doctrines of the Gospel; which he had thoroughly digested in his Mind, and knew well how to represent to others. His usual *Method* was to reduce his Subject into *Propositions*, and then apply it suitably to the various Cases.

He spent several Winters in a *Catechetical* Evening Exercise on the Lord's-Day to a numerous Congregation in the Heart of <sup>The Old-Jewry.</sup> the City; and went over in his Expositions both the shorter, and larger *Assemblies Catechisms*, and the principal Points of the *Popish* Controversy. Many, especially of the younger Persons who attended that Exercise, remember it with Pleasure: God remarkably own'd and blessed his Endeavours for sound Instruction, and serious Impressions upon the Hearts of many.

He was excellent in *Prayer*, and remarkable for *Pertinence* and *Fulness* of Matter upon *special* Occasions. The many Opportunities we have had of praying together in private Families, and upon particular Emergencies, have given very affecting and instructing Instances of it.

He was tender of the *Reputation* of younger Ministers, and greatly delighted in  
their

their Conversation. Nothing was a more agreeable Entertainment than to communicate any Light and Direction, which his own Observation and Experience had furnished him with : And he greatly rejoiced in the hopeful Prospects from the serious Spirit, and excellent Accomplishments of several of them. And younger Ministers must be countenanced and encouraged, if ever we expect to keep up the Interest of *Christian Liberty*, and *Practical Godliness*, among us. He had himself the singular Blessing of seeing five Children grown up, and disposed of in the World, who were all Dutiful and Religious ; one of them is a worthy Minister, who is labouring in the Vineyard with great Acceptance and Success.

Mr. Baxter.

He laboured under the great Infelicity of a *crazy Constitution*, which, he used to say, he brought into the World with him ; and was often exercised with Weakness and Pain. He has many a time gone into the Pulpit, without any comfortable Rest the Night before, and groaning under the Burthen of the mortal Body. He used to repeat upon such Occasions an Expression he heard from the Mouth of an excellent Person, who was much experienced this Way ; “ When we are Sick we groan, when we “ are Well we lust : Sickness is our Bur- “ then, Health is our Snare.” In all his long and various Exercise, he always expressed

pressed a patient Submission, and humble Resignation to the divine Will ; and was only solicitous, that his Faith and Patience might hold out to the End.

His *natural Temper* was something *Melancholy* and Timorous. When I discoursed with him concerning his spiritual State, and future Prospects, in his last Sickness ; he spake to this Sense ; “ I hope my Heart “ has been right with God : I think I have “ made it the Business of my Life to please “ him : I have an humble Confidence in “ the Covenant faithfulness of a gracious “ God ; and the precious Merit of the Re- “ deemer’s Blood : But pretend not to “ Transports of Affection, and rapturous “ Joys, for, says he, you know my *Tem- per* and Make.”

He had a profound Reverence of the glorious Majesty of God : The highest Thoughts, and most ardent Affection to the blessed Redeemer : His Soul was full of Love to all good Men : And he possessed a settled Peace and Composure of Mind ; nor did his bodily Weakness, or fearful Temper, which ever made him Cautious and Humble, appear to disturb his Peace, or give him Uneasiness of Mind.

He had a large Acquaintance among the serious and judicious Part of the Town, of all the Denominations among us ; and possessed a general Love and Esteem. I believe he is thought by all who knew him a




Loss to the World, and to the Church of God.

It will be but a little Time, and it will be said of *Me*, and said of every one of *You*, "He is dead." Many of our Friends are already *fallen asleep*; we are hastening apace one after another. God only knows whose Turn it will be next; and God grant, that whenever our Turn shall come, we may be found *ready*; and may be able to leave the World without uneasy *Fear*, and with the well-grounded *Hope* of eternal Life.



The

**The *SPEECH* at the Grave.**

 **H**E Prophets do they live for ever, and your Fathers where are they? *We are surrounded in this \*Place with the Graves and Monuments of many of them, Elder and Younger; and have seen this verified in several Instances of late. What is the Voice of this Providence, when we see an open Grave, and a dead Friend and Brother before our Eyes? What does he who being dead, yet speak to us? Is not this the Language to us all; Behold the Fruit of your Apostacy and Sin; see in me the Sentence of the Law executed, and the Righteousness and Faithfulness of God to his Word: Dust thou art, and unto Dust shall thou return; and Death hath pass'd upon all Men, for all have sinned; without Exemption to the best of Men. See the Frailty of Nature, and Uncertainty of Life. The natural Tendency to a Dissolution, and gradual Decay in every Con-*

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\* The Burying-Ground in Bunhill-Fields.

stitution; besides the Diseases of Body and Accidents of Life. Consider your End and the Measure of your Days what it is, and know how Frail you are. *What I am, that you must quickly be, the Youngest and Strongest of you all. Where I am, there you must be in a little Time; a Spectacle of Mortality to others, as I am now to you. Improve your Time to the best Advantage, for Time is short; and in a little while it will be said, And Time shall be no more. Time, the precious Talent of Life, flies swift, and spends every Moment; and yet upon the Use of present Time, depends a whole Eternity. Every Man will be Happy or Miserable for ever, according to the Improvement of the Time of Life. O fill it up with proper Duty; squander none away in Idleness; use it to the noblest Purposes; improve it with the greatest Wisdom; redeem the Time because the Days are evil. Prepare to follow, and provide for another World. Make your Peace with an offended God, while he is in the Way; fly to the blessed Redeemer for Reconciliation and Acceptance with him; comply with the Terms of the Gospel Covenant; beg the renewing Influence of the divine Spirit, and act in a Dependence upon his Grace; labour after a weaned Heart from this World, and a heavenly Frame of Mind, and a growing Meetness for the Inheritance of the Saints. Lay up in Store a good Foundation*



tion against the Time to come, that you may lay hold on eternal Life; *and may be found ready when your Lord shall come; and that when he shall appear at last, you may have Confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his Coming.*

*Conceive him speaking to careless Sinners, who live in a Course of Wickedness and Security; in a stupid Neglect of God and their Souls, or with deceitful and presumptuous Hopes; What meanest thou, O Sleeper, arise and call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon thee, and thou perish not. Awake thou who sleepest, and arise from the Dead, and Christ will give thee Life. Recover your selves out of the Snare of the Devil, who are taken Captive by him at his Will, if God peradventure will give you Repentance, to the Acknowledgment of the Truth. Break off your Sins by Righteousness, and turn to God, without a Moment's delay: To Day, while it is called to Day, hear his Voice, and harden not your Heart. O that you were Wise, and would understand this, and consider your latter End. Dare not to sleep under the Wrath of God: Fear the Vengeance of eternal Fire. Death is near; behold the Judge standeth at the Door. Trust a faithful Friend, and long Experience; you will bitterly bewail your past Neglect, and give a World for a Day of Grace, at the End of Life.*

*Conceive him speaking to surviving Relatives; Weep not for me, for all Tears are wiped away: I am eased of all my Pains, and entred into Rest: There is no more Death, nor Sorrow, nor Crying, nor any more Pain. After the Labour and Sorrow of Life, I possess fulness of Joy, and Pleasures for evermore. It is no Uneasiness to be absent from the Body, and leave the World; for I am now present with the Lord, and with the Spirits of the perfected Just. Remember the God to whom you have been devoted, your own God, and your Father's God: Secure the Protection and Favour of your heavenly Father, now you have no Father on Earth; live in Peace, and the God of Love and Peace will be with you; and dare none of you meet me at the great Day in an unrenewed State.*

*Lastly, Conceive him speaking to his Brethren in the Ministry; O live and act like dying Men: Speak to precious Souls in the Name of Christ, as dying Men: Pray to God, as dying Men, upon the Brink of the Grave, and in View of another World; act in all your Administrations under the powerful Impression of an approaching Change, and final Account; with strict Sincerity of Heart; with great Diligence in all your Work; with Faithfulness to all with whom you are concerned; with a warm Zeal for the Glory of God, and the Good of Souls; and with unfainting Perseverance*  
in

*in all the Conflicts of Life : Work the Works of him who sent you while it is Day, the Night cometh when no Man can work. As for me, I have thro' Grace fought the good Fight, and finished my Course, and kept the Faith : I obtained Mercy to be faithful ; and I have found Mercy of the Lord. Fear not the Difficulties in the Way, for Christ will be with you always unto the End of the World. Be faithful to the Death, and he will give you a Crown of Life : The most abundant Labour in the Lord will not be in vain. Angels will convey your departed Souls to Abraham's Bosom ; and when the chief Shepherd shall appear, you shall receive a Crown of Life which fadeth not away.*

F I N I S.





BOOKS published by the late

Mr. JOHN BILLINGS

1. **T**HE Believer's daily Exercise in the Scripture Precept of being in the Fear of the Lord all the Day long. Explained and urged in four Sermons. Printed for Thomas Parkhurst. 1690.

3. Two Sermons upon 2 Peter 3. Printed for T. Parkhurst about the Year 1700.

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